Aotearoa Black Press#6

Hey boys and girls!

You might be thinking we've forgotten all of you and decided to abandon the project. That is not true.

Our studio has moved and we've had to restock all of our resources. Big thanks for everyone that's contributed: we've got 6 reams of paper and enough money to cover printing for the next two issues. What's more, the Cat collective in Australia have offered web space for Aotearoa Black Press.

A web site is in the works, so you will soon see articles, graphics and so on available on that Inter-web thingy.

Watch this space.

Hey you! Keep watching. (Ha-ha, suckers!)

We are in need of people who can write coherent, accessible articles, photographers, graphic designers, printers, artists, computer programmers, radio geeks, camera operators, make-up artists, puppeteers, dancers, musicians, propagandists, activists, teachers, agitators, television presenters and someone to fetch me tea and give me massages. Get your mind out of the gutter, I mean the good old-fashioned kind that was always legal.

Comments/criticism/hatemail
- **hipasfuhk@yahoo.co.nz**

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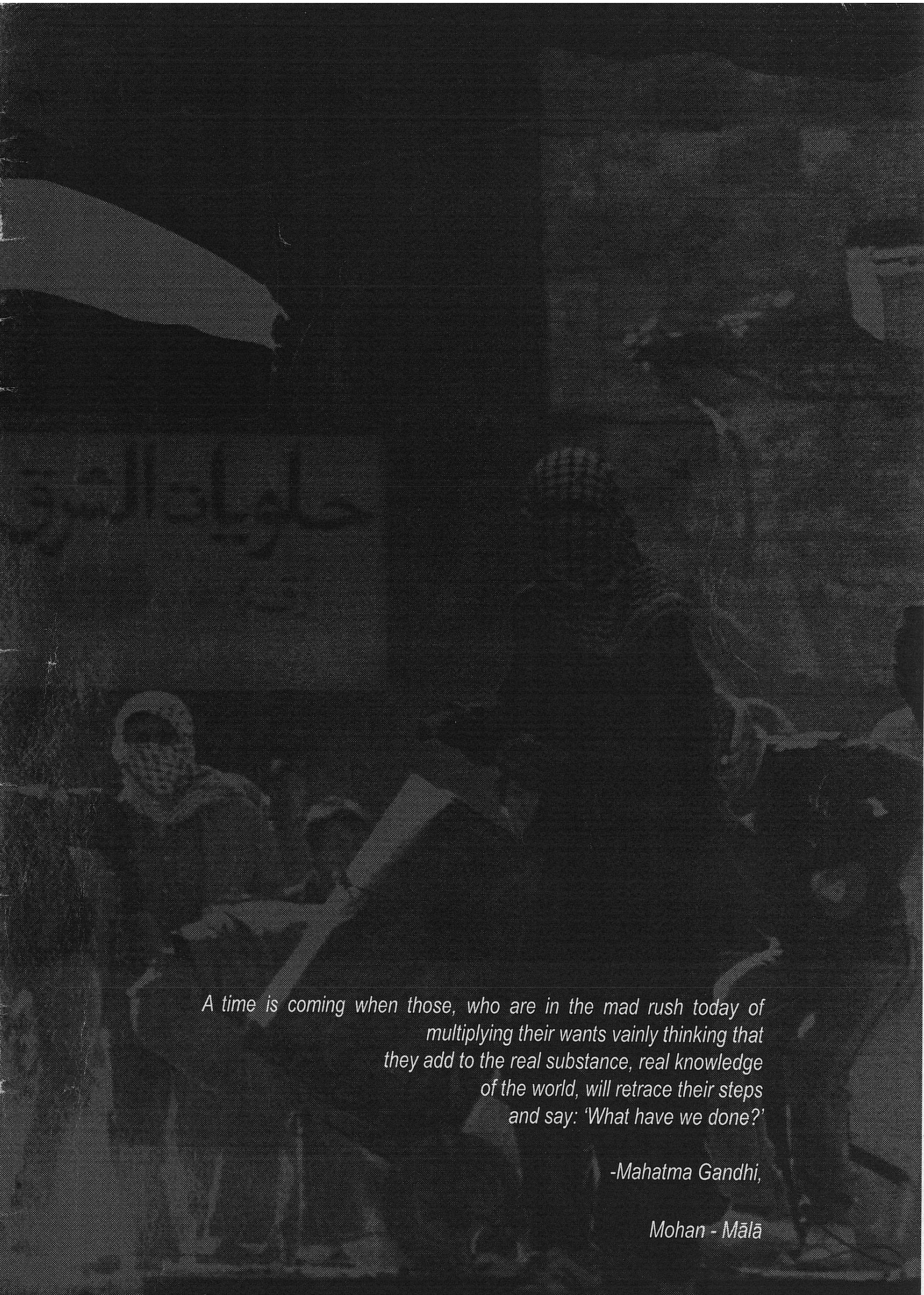


A time is coming when those, who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say: 'What have we done?'

-Mahatma Gandhi,

Mohan - Mālā

What Are Affinity Groups?

Adopted from an online version of "Anarchism in Action"
http://www.radio4all.net/aia/

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. You can form an affinity group with your friends, people from your community, workplace, or organization.

Affinity groups challenge top-down decision-making and organizing, and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see by giving complete freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group. Affinity groups by nature are decentralized and non-hierarchical, two important principles of anarchist organizing and action.

History Of Affinity Groups

The idea of affinity groups comes out of the anarchist and workers movement that was created in the late 19th century and fought fascism in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Anarchist movement provides an exhilarating example of a movement, and the actual possibility of a society based on decentralized organization, direct democracy and the principles behind them.

Small circles of good friends, called "tertulias" would meet at cafes to discuss ideas and plan actions. In 1888, a period of intense class conflict in Europe and of local insurrection and struggle in Spain, the Anarchist Organization of the Spanish Region made this traditional form (tertulias) the basis of its organization.

Decades later, the Iberian Anarchist Federation, which contained 50,000 activists, organized into affinity groups and confederated into local, regional, and national councils. Wherever several FAI affinity groups existed, they formed a local federation. Local federations were coordinated by committees which were made up of one mandated delegate from each affinity group. Mandated delegates were sent from local federations to regional committees and finally to the Peninsular Committee. Affinity groups remained autonomous as they carried out education, organized and supported local struggles. The intimacy of the groups made police infiltration difficult.

The idea of large-scale affinity group based organization was planted in the United States on April 30, 1977 when 2,500 people, organized into affinity groups, occupied the Seabrook, New Hampshire nuclear power plant. The growing anti-nuclear power and disarmament movements adopted this mode, and used it in many successful actions throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. Since then, it has been used by the Central America solidarity movement, lesbian/gay liberation movement, Earth First and earth liberation movement, and many others.

Starting An Affinity Group

An affinity group could be a relationship among people that lasts for years among a group of friends and activists, or it could be a week long relationship based around a single action. Either way, it is important to join an affinity group that is best suited to you and your interests.

If you are forming an affinity group in your city or town, find friends or fellow activists who have similar issue interests, and thus would want to go to similar actions. Also, look for people who would be willing to use similar tactics - if you want to do relatively high risk lockdowns, someone who does not want to be in that situation may not want to be in the affinity group. That person could do media or medic work, but it may not be best if they are completely uncomfortable around certain tactics of direct action.

If you are looking to join an affinity group at a mass action, first find out what affinity groups open to new members and which ones are closed. For many people, affinity groups are based on trusting relationships based around years of friendship and work, thus they might not want people they don't know in their affinity group. Once you find which affinity groups are open, look for ones that have an issue interest or action tactic that you are drawn to.

Conclusion

Affinity groups are an extremely flexible and adaptable mode of organizing: a group can act as anything from a clandestine cell to a part of a mass mobilization. The elimination of a command and control system has been found so efficient that many special forces, including the New Zealand SAS, operate in squads which operate precisely like affinity groups.

TABLE 1.12

The world's priorities?
(annual expenditure)

Basic education for all	$6 billion[a]
Cosmetics in the USA	$8 billion
Water and sanitation for all	$9 billion[a]
Ice cream in Europe	$11 billion
Reproductive health for all women	$12 billion[a]
Perfumes in Europe and the USA	$12 billion
Basic health and nutrition	$13 billion[a]
Pet foods in Europe and the USA	$17 billion
Business entertainment in Japan	$35 billion
Cigarettes in Europe	$50 billion
Alcoholic drinks in Europe	$105 billion
Narcotic drugs in the world	$400 billion
Military spending in the world	$780 billion

a. Estimated additional annual cost to achieve universal access to basic social services in all developing countries.

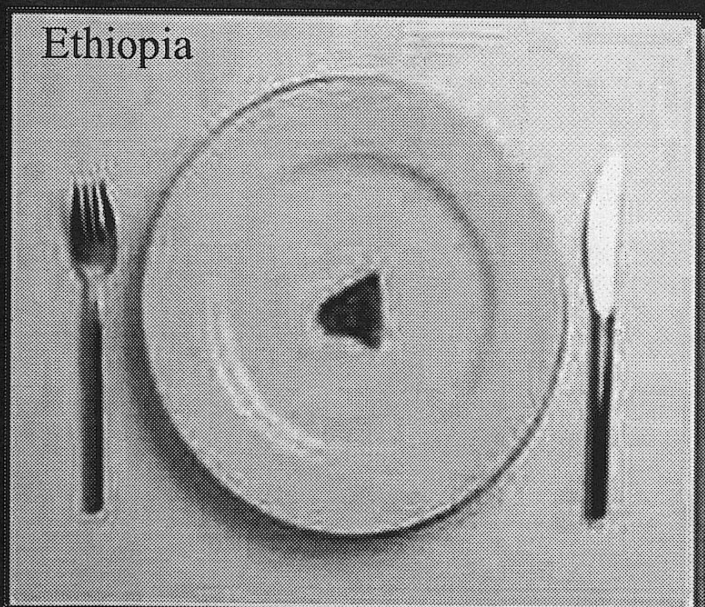
Source: Euromonitor 1997; UN 1997g; UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF 1994; Worldwide Research,

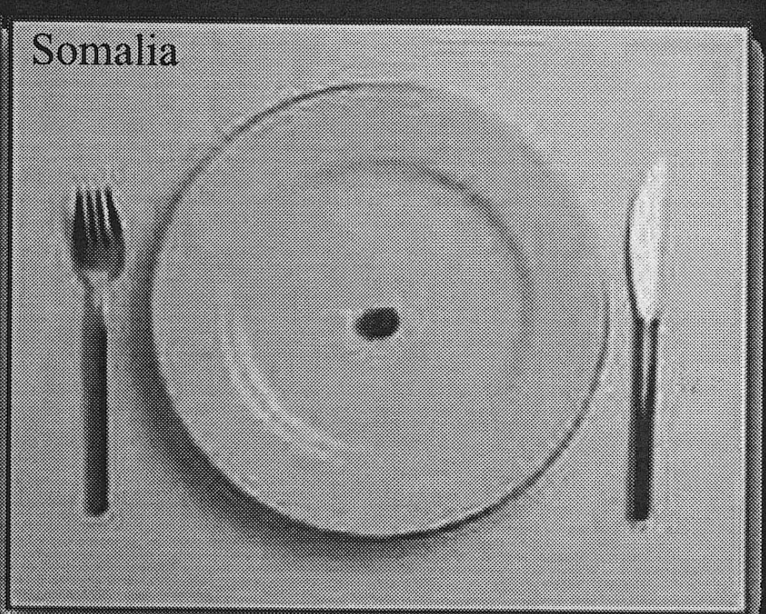
"It doesn't take a genius to pump up the GNP [of a developing country] by burning down rainforests, using slave labor and social repression to keep things in place."

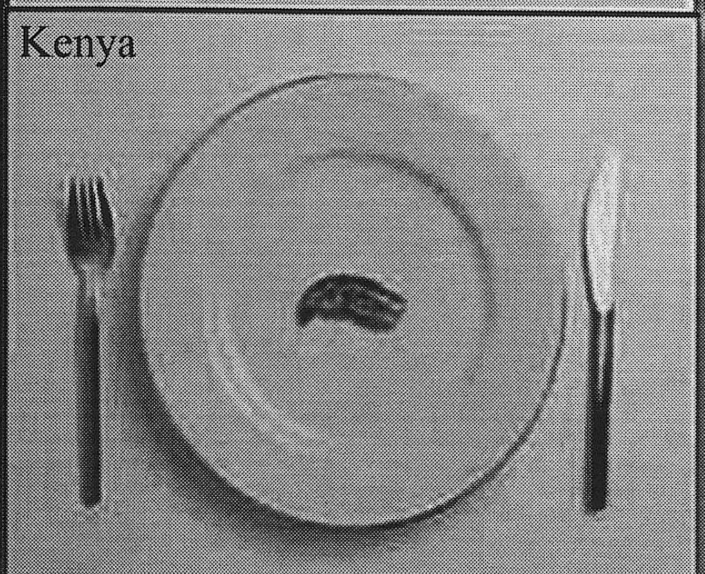
Hazel Henderson, economist

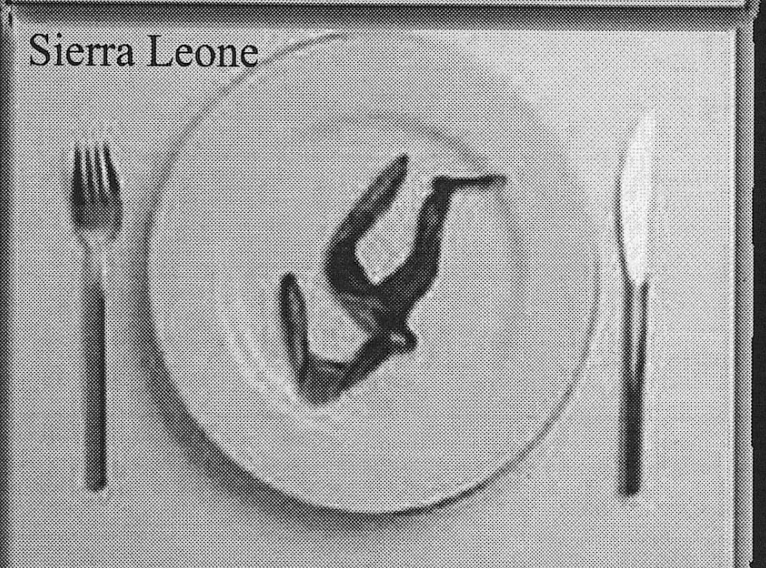
We hold that capital, the common inheritance of humanity, in that it is the fruit of the collaboration of past generations and present generations, ought to be accessible to all, so that none may be excluded: and so that no one, on the other hand, may claim to a fragment at the expense of everyone else.In short, what we want is equality:de facto equality by way of corollary to, or rather, essential precondition for liberty. **From each according to abilities, to each according to needs**: that is what we truly and earnestly yearn for:that is what shall be, since there is no prescription that may prevail over demands that are both legitimate and necessary.That is why we are marked down for every calumny.

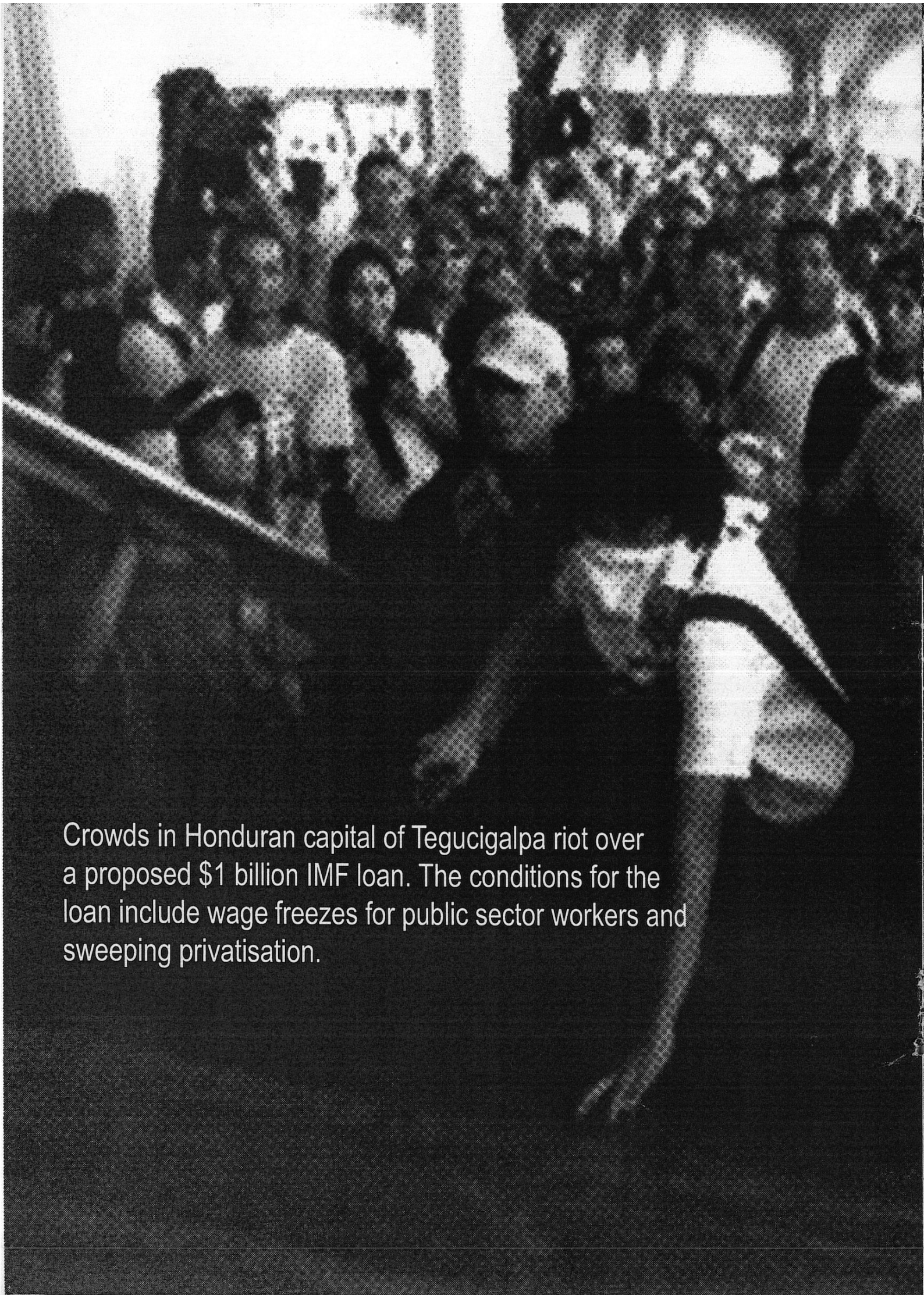
-Peter Kropotkin,
Declaration of the Anarchists arraigned before the criminal court in Lyon January 19,1883


Ethiopia

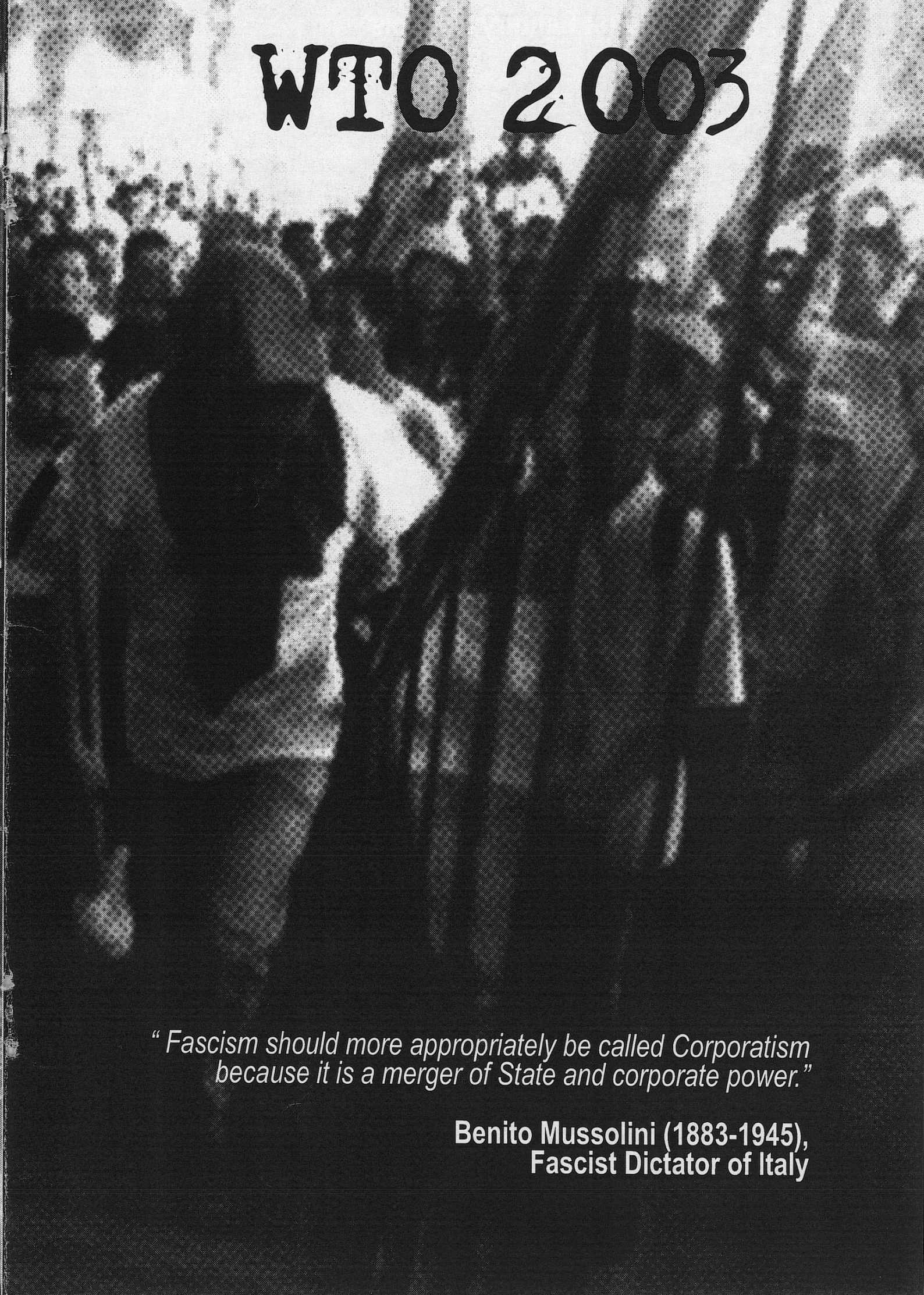

Somalia


Kenya


Sierra Leone



Crowds in Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa riot over a proposed $1 billion IMF loan. The conditions for the loan include wage freezes for public sector workers and sweeping privatisation.



" Fascism should more appropriately be called Corporatism because it is a merger of State and corporate power."

Benito Mussolini (1883-1945),
Fascist Dictator of Italy

21st Century Mongols

As Gengis Khan's Golden Horde advanced across Asia, they used a devious strategy to intimidate their enemies into surrender. When faced with the prospect of taking a city, the Horde would first demand its capitulation. If the city would reject the demand, it would be faced with a debilitating seige designed to destroy its material supplies, morale and numbers of defenders. Once the city was sufficiently weakened, the Horde would storm it, raze the buildings and erect monumental pyramids constructed out of the skulls of those that dare defy them. The agricultural land was sown with salt to make it barren. Fast movement, coordination and propaganda then served to exaggerate the numbers of the Horde, making it appear far larger than it actually was. The psychological shock usually served to frighten nearby areas enough to submit to Mongol rule.

The idea of using sieges, blockades and other ways to create famine as a strategy of war is not new. An army might encircle a city or area to cut off its supplies of food and starve the population - as the Nazis have done with the 900-day siege of Leningrad. Tinpot dictators use their control of food supplies to control their people: Saddam Hussein actually strengthened his grip on power in Iraq after economic sanctions were imposed: his people became totally dependent on the government for their food. When famine occurs in the modern world, it is more often as a result of a deliberate policy rather than natural factors such as pests or poverty. It is not a stretch to state that these policies are so widespread and damaging that they represent nothing less than a form of state-sponsored economic warfare.

The Myth Of Underproduction

There is a myth that is perpetuated about famine: the world is overpopulated and there is not enough food to go around. The global North, the industrialized parts of the world, sustains itself by the virtue of its own productivity; the global South, the long-suffering agrarian part, is lacking the modern technology needed to feed its own exploding population. It is seen as self-evident that more food must be produced to solve the crisis. This myth serves an important propaganda purpose, but it fails to stand up to even the simplest examination.

The global production of food, for instance, is actually far higher than it needs to be - there is about 2.5 times as much food produced annually as the world requires. Most of the food is produced by the global South, which accounts for roughly two-thirds of the world's population. The remaining third in the global North then consume almost half of what is produced. The global North is actually quite dependent on the agriculture of the South. A disturbing statistic is that there are about as many starving people in sub-Saharan Africa as there are overweight people in the US alone.

The Stage Is Set

The control by the North over the global agriculture goes back to the 1944 Bretton Woods conference. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) were founded. Their original purpose was the reconstruction of industralized societies in the North destroyed by World War II. Following that, their focus has moved to programmes in the South. The purpose of this work was said to be development, but the effect it has had was to integrate the South into the global financial system dominated by the North. IMF loans were granted to states in the South on the conditions that these states' economies are developed in certain directions.

The internationalisation of capital has also seen a corresponding internationalisation of trade: the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was signed in Geneva in 1947. The stated policy was the liberalisation of the market: the removal of tariffs on exports, or "free trade". The aims of the GATT developed over several rounds of negotiations and expansion of the treaty, but the agreement was anything but general - the richest countries still consistently lobby to protect their domestic markets through state subsidies, tariffs and other barriers while demanding that poor countries remove all such barriers. The contradiction between the name and the reality of GATT became so ridiculous that serious cosmetic measures had to be taken: specifically, GATT was superseded by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1996.

The Hype Of Free Trade

"Free trade" has, of course, become the philosopher's stone of foreign policy: far-right demagogues such as the ACT Party suggest New Zealand would be better off to abandon its nuclear-free policy for the prize of free trade with the US. New Zealand is no stranger to market liberalism: the economic structure of the country was overhauled at the initiative of Roger Douglas's infamous "Rogernomics". In the following two decade, full employment disappeared and violent crime increased more than eightfold. Despite these setbacks, the National Business Review found it's Rich List hit a record high this year. Today, "Rogernomics" is a household word which is derisively spat out rather than spoken. Nonetheless, New Zealand's state-owned energy, telecommunications and rail infrastructure was privatized amongst the cheers of the free market brigade - our homegrown business elites.

The US is the most ardent advocate of free trade and supplies the most capital to the IMF and World Bank, which is then lent out to states in the South. Typically, these loans are never seen by anyone but a small elite, which proceeds to squander or misappropriate them, leaving the nation in debt. At this point, the debtor nation must stimulate its economy enough to pay back its loan - and under the WTO guidelines, the barriers to trade are to be removed to stimulate the flow of foreign capital into the country.

The introduction of foreign capital has a tremendous effect on marginal economies of the South. These economies are mainly supported by agricultural produce, so export of agricultural goods becomes a priority. The usual measures taken to promote export revolve around replacing subsistence agriculture (which answers to the needs of the population) with cash crops which are traded on the global market. The land becomes consolidated in the hands of small groups of landowners, and subsistence farmers become plantation labourers. Effectively, economies of the South are redesigned to be sources of agricultural products, cheap labour and raw materials for the North.

The North, for its part, uses its creditor status as leverage in negotiations. The so-called "free market" is a free in name only: the North spends over US$300 billion on agricultural subsidies, swamping the global markets with its own crops. To put things plainly, the South is forced to compete with the North on unfavourable terms.

The loans granted by institutions such as the IMF are collected from tax revenue. The final arrangements result in a system where the poor in the rich countries pay the rich in poor countries. Much of the foreign aid provided in this way goes on to import technology or arms from the North. The amounts actually provided by foreign aid are outweighed by loan repayments to the North. This economic domination of the South by the North is so complete that it can only be described as a modern form of colonialism. At the same time, inequality has become so institutionalised in the societies of the North that the average white collar professional in the US spends more time working and is in greater debt than the average peasant in the South.

This mode of development has proved to be a disaster practically everywhere it has been tried. As impoverished countries struggle to repay the interest on their loans, strict austerity measures are imposed under the threat of foreign aid being - quite literally, under the threat of starvation. Those countries that have the temerity to oppose this world order quickly found themselves on the wrong end of an invasion or coup - whether Cuba in 1961, Chile in 1973, Grenada in 1982 or Iraq in 2003. The latter is especially ironic: it is a country laid waste by brutal sanctions responsible for 1.5 million deaths, invaded against the wishes of the world's population to grant the US access to its oil. The parallels with Mongol strategy could not be plainer.

Threaten, beseige, storm - and let this be a warning.

POLICIA
POLICIA

" There is ...a huge tacit conspiracy between the U.S. government, its agencies and its multinational corporations, on the one hand, and local business and military cliques in the Third World, on the other, to assume complete control of these countries and "develop" them on a joint venture basis. The military leaders of the Third World were carefully nurtured by the U.S. security establishment to serve as the "enforcers" of this joint venture partnership, and they have been duly supplied with machine guns and the latest data on methods of interrogation of subversives."

Edward S. Herman

Police officers without identification illegally filming protesters at the March 22nd, 2003 Auckland anti-war protest.

"Copwatch" video footage from www.indymedia.org.nz

Biometrics: the crime of privacy

New Zealand and US governments have recently made public their plans for a more comprehensive way of monitoring their citizens. UK, Australia, and Canada have also agreed to these plans.

Currently there are 27 countries (mostly European, but including Australia and New Zealand) whose citizens don't need visas to travel around the US. They are still required to have a minimum of facial biometric scans on their computer readable passports from October 26th 2004 onwards.

Biometrics is the name of the technology being used to identify people by their physical characteristics such as faces, irises, fingerprints or voice.The computer uses a mathematical algorithm to produce a biomertic signature unique to the individual, which is then retained in databases. The authorities who will retain these databases will include the organs responsible for obtaining the initial scans locally and any authority which the US government sees fit. The US claims that this is a necessary measure to stop immigration crimes and crime of the terrorist variety. It is clear that US agencies such as the FAA, FBI, and the CIA will have access to this vast pool of information. Australia is currently making preparations for introducing the practice, while the UK says it will be ready by 2005. The biometric information will be stored on passports by way of magnetic strips or chips.

One of the problems with the system is that it is not foolproof. In the case of the fingerprint biometrics machines it has been proven that they can be reliably fooled using non-specialised knowledge and ingredients. The accuracy of the biometric system can also be corrupted by poor matching from the machine. Of course actual terrorists don't usually pose for mugshots, let alone biometric scans.

The equipment manufacturers cannot claim infallibility. People could be locked up or executed in the US because of unreliable or false intelligence. Suppose this magically effective face-recognition software is 99.99 percent accurate. That is, if someone is a terrorist, there is a 99.99 percent chance that the software indicates "terrorist," and if someone is not a terrorist, there is a 99.99 percent chance that the software indicates "non-terrorist." Assume that one in ten million flyers, on average, is a terrorist. Is the software any good? No. The software will generate 1000 false alarms for every one real terrorist. And every false alarm still means that all the security people go through all of their security procedures. Because the population of non-terrorists is so much larger than the number of terrorists, the test is useless. This result is counterintuitive and surprising, but it is correct. The false alarms in this kind of system render it mostly useless.

Closed circuit television with facial recognition watches over people in the UK as they walk down the busy streets. Originally it was claimed that this was to monitor the movements of soccer hooligans, though the cameras are still operating. Since 1998 mexican authorities kept 60 million fingerprint recognition files of individual citizens allegedly to stop people from registering to vote more than once.

As of January 1st 2004 every foreign visitor to the US will be required to submit to being fingerprinted and photographed upon arrival.

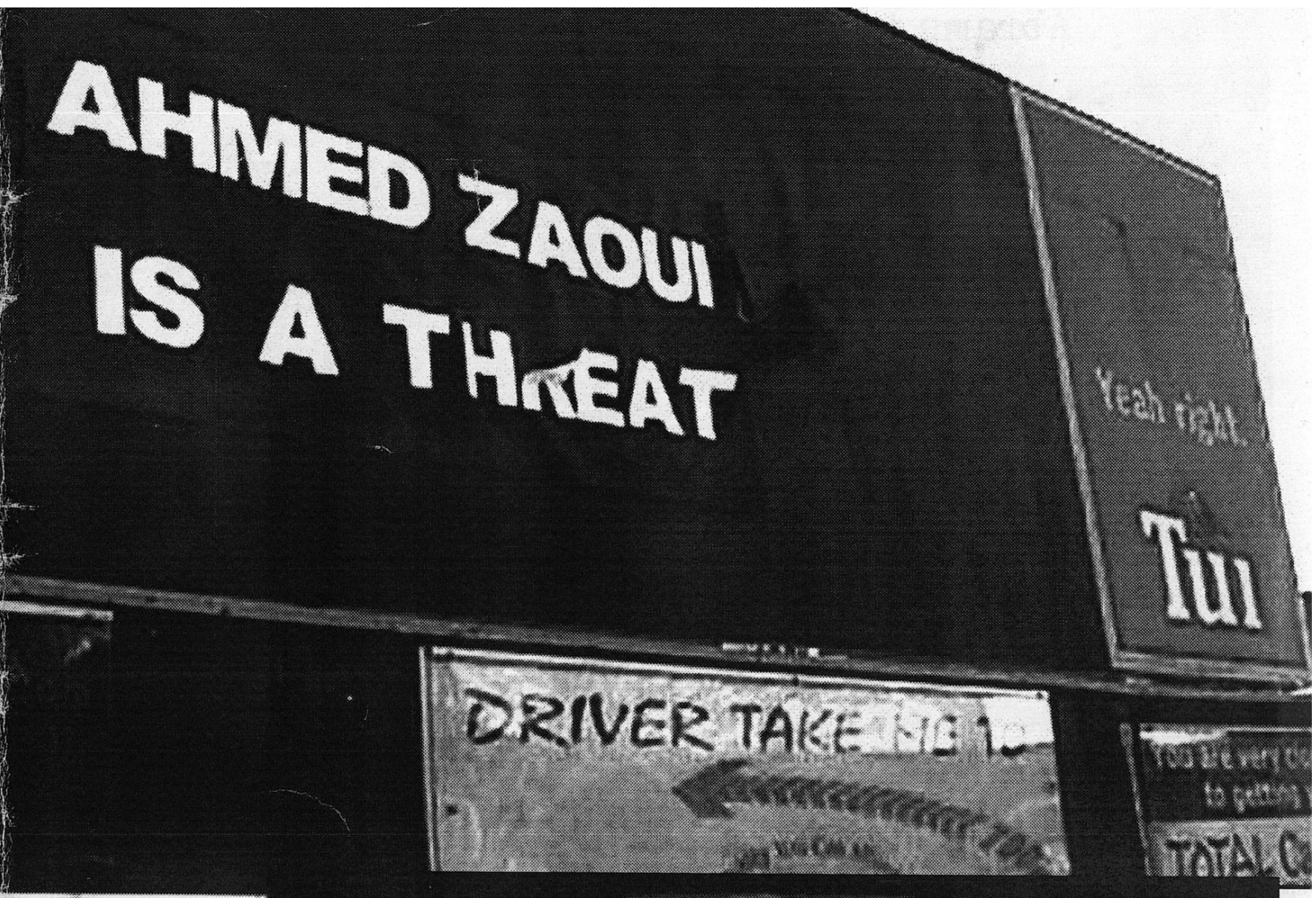
New Zealand's decision to fall in with the US on anything related to fighting "terrorism" has only led to degradation of civil liberties. Two surveillance Acts were passed by Parliament in early October. Changes to the Telecommunications Act introduced into Parliament in 2002 impose legal obligations on telecommunications companies to co-operate with surveillance of their customers communications, including real time access to e-mail, text messages, and mobile phone communications with an interception warrant. Crimes Amendment Act no. 6 gives Police and Security Intelligence Services new powers to monitor computer networks and to break into individuals' computers.

However, the only person locked up in New Zealand as a terrorist suspect could more accurately be described as a suspect Muslim Arab. An Algerian man Ahmed Zaoui is imprisoned by the New Zealand government for almost a year based on information supplied to the SIS by Algeria's notoriously bloodthirsty military rulers. Zaoui has not been convicted of any crime.

New laws that enable the state to invade the privacy of its citizens are passed in the US and are almost invariably adopted by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and UK. These laws actually allow for the persecution of specific individuals and groups internationally with the aid of information/security sharing treaties already in place. Governments pass laws "under urgency" through parliament using the guise of protecting the public from the criminals - in reality these laws treat the public as though they are criminals.

The crackdown on activists has already begun: Auckland man Bruce Hubbard wrote an e-mail to the U.S embassy (in wellington) in march. The e-mail contains publicly available details of war crimes being commited in Iraq,previous and presently.Bruce expresses his feelings regarding the U.S government and the misery they inflict. The e-mail is accurate, so the embassy is offended. Months have passed, then in late October the police show up at Bruce's parents' home looking for him. The police threatened to escalate charges and confiscate his computer if he doesn't volunteer himself for their scrutiny. Eventually the police found Bruce and took him to a North Shore station to question him. He is charged under the Telecommunications Act, Section 103 (misuse of a telephone) for sending an e-mail to a foreign embassy in his own country.

On Manhattan Island (New York) are armed, uniformed U.S Army soldiers patrol major subway stations and streets. No-one is allowed on or off Manhattan Island on public holidays. Apparently most people believe this is for their own protection.



face

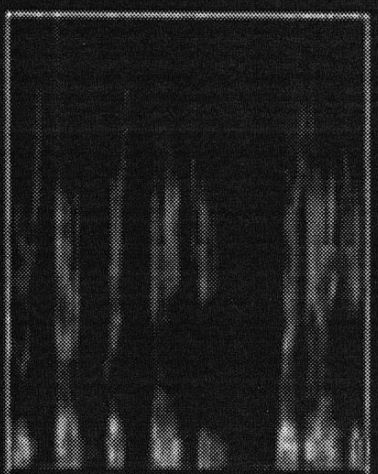
facial thermograms

fingerprint

hand vein

retinal scan

Iris

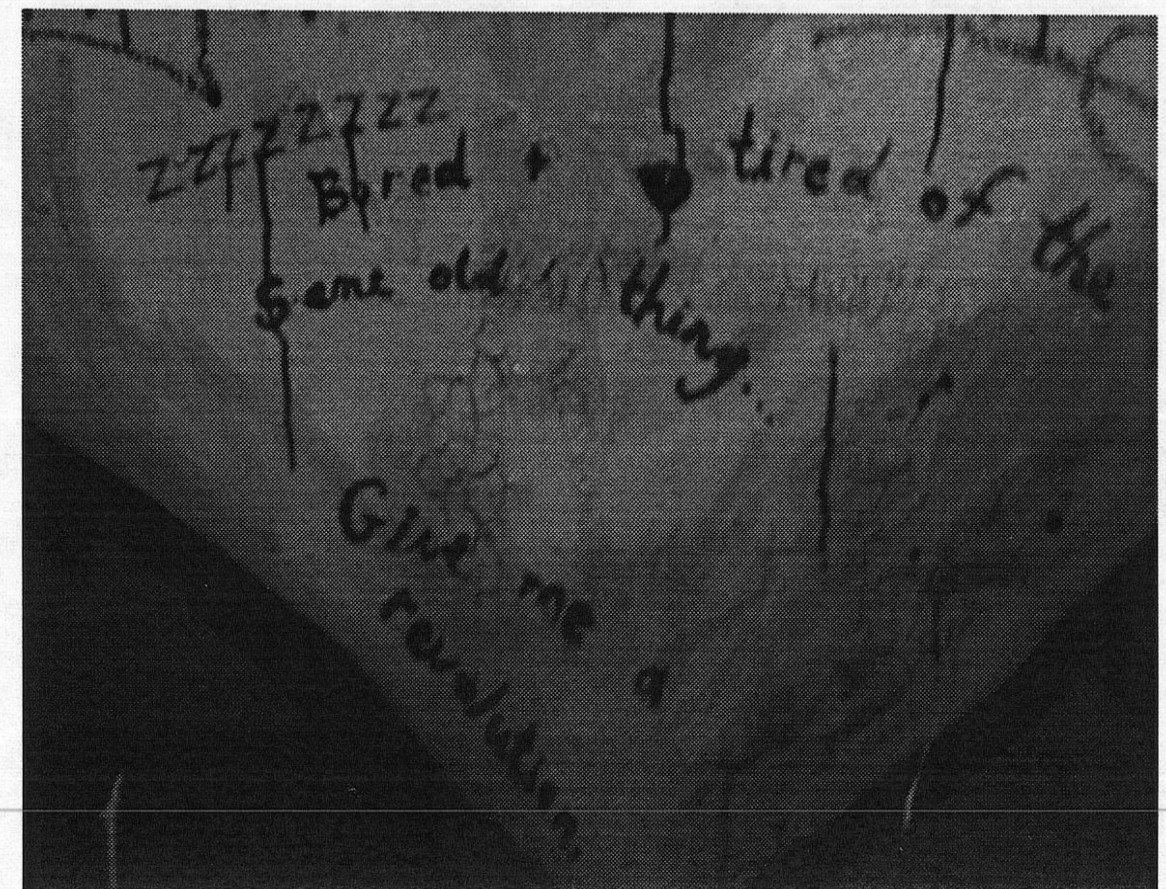


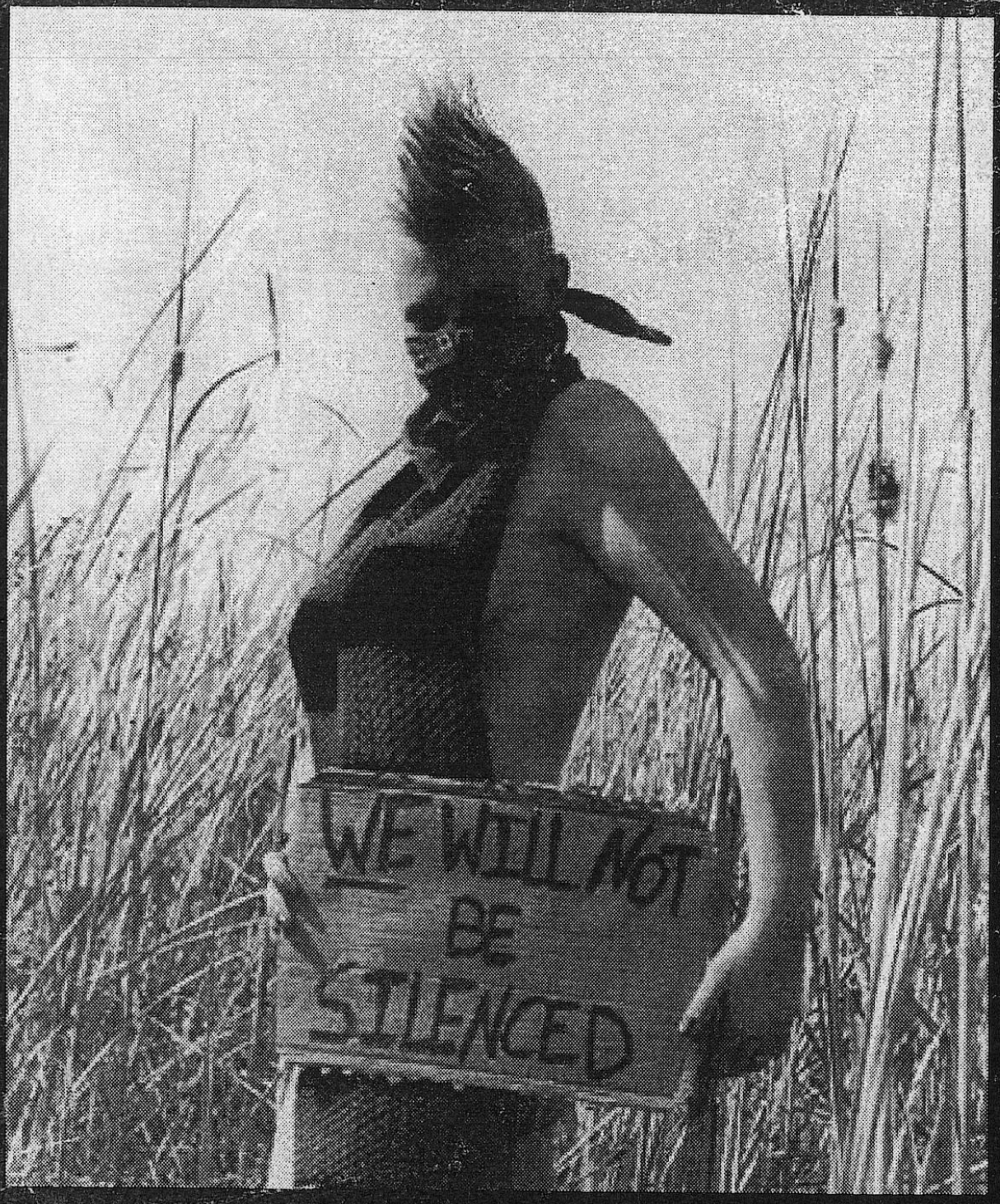
voice

Abrams tank meets land mine, Iraq

Black Hawk down (will they ever learn?)

This happened today. A group of anti-capitalist protesters holding the line against a baton charge at the FTAA conference in Miami




WE WILL NOT
BE
SILENCED